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AUTHOR Ramanathan, Hema
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ABSTRACT

This paper describes teacher education programs in India, comparing Indian and U.S. field experiences. Data were collected at public and private teacher education institutions in a major city in India. Researchers interviewed deans from several institutions and analyzed institution handbooks, course syllabi, and relevant official documents. Results indicated that the purpose of early field experiences was to prepare students for teaching. The purpose of student teaching was to give students experience in planning and implementing lessons. Placement for student teaching and early field experiences was the responsibility of faculty members. Early field experiences included both on-campus laboratory and off-campus experiences. The focus of early field experiences was laboratory experiences. Early field experience assessment was formative, and student teaching assessment was formative and summative. College faculty took primary responsibility in supervising early field experiences, and their role in student teaching was intensive. Cooperating teachers acted only as models during early field experiences. During student teaching they acted as host, observer, and supervisor. There are more differences than similarities in U.S. and Indian field experiences. Differences are apparent in the goals of field experiences, assessment models, and the roles of schools and cooperating teachers. Similarities are in placement practices and the relationship between the cooperating teachers and university supervisors. A significant factor contributing to the differences is the definition of field experiences in each country. (Contains 14 references.) (SM)

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COMPARISON OF FIELD EXPERIENCES IN INDIA AND THE U.S.

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Hema Ramanathan

Butler University

4600 Sunset Avenue

Indianapolis

IN 46208

Tel: 317-940-9590

Fax: 317-940-6481

e-mail: hramanat@butler.edu

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COMPARISON OF FIELD EXPERIENCES IN INDIA AND THE U.S.

The importance of field experiences in teacher preparation in the U.S. has been increasingly evident as signified by both the time the students spend in it (NCATE, 1995), and the innovations that try to enrich the experience for the preservice teachers (McIntyre & Byrd, 1996). These experiences involve a collaborative effort among the teacher education institution, the organized profession of teaching, and the school systems (AACTE 1983; Holmes Group, 1986; Webb, Gherke, Ishler & Mendoza, 1981).

This paper describes teacher education programs in India and compares formal field experiences in India and the U.S. The purposes of the field experiences, a description of the sites, the activities and outcomes of the field experiences, and the personnel involved in these field experiences will be described. Since this paper addresses researchers in this country, the reader's knowledge of the teacher education system in the U.S. will be taken for granted and will not be described.

Teacher education in India

Teacher education, like other educational issues in India, does not have a high profile. But changes in policy have been initiated. In 1993 the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) was instituted by an act of Parliament. The purpose is to lay down guidelines and regulate teacher education and make teacher education accountable at the Central (federal) level and not at the State level, as it is now.

Three models of teacher education to certify teachers for grades 9-12 are to be found in India. The most common model is a one-academic year, post-baccalaureate program. Distance learning or correspondence courses that qualify teachers is another and a four-year integrated model is the third (Joshi & Thomas, 1991).

Teacher education institutions in India need to be recognized by the NCTE or the State Department of Education (DOE) and are affiliated to it. As in the US, they are either (state)

government-funded or private institutions. In matters regarding staffing, curriculum and experiences offered, the faculty do not have any decision-making authority. Admission and exit criteria and guidelines are detailed by the NCTE and implemented by the faculty in the teacher education institutions (The National Council for Teacher Education Act, 1993). Government-funded institutions in particular must abide by the decisions of the State DOEs.

However, some institutions may apply for an autonomous status, permitting them to define their own curriculum in terms of courses they teach, provided they are passed by the state DOE. These institutions must further provide proof of experiences that go beyond the requirement of the state DOE in both quality and quantity to qualify for autonomous status (The National Council for Teacher Education Act, 1993).

Yet, there are certain requirements that are inviolable. For example, regarding admission criteria, teacher education students who plan to teach grades 6 through 10 must possess at least a Bachelor's degree while those who wish to teach grades 11 and 12 must process at least a Master's in their content area (Department of Education, 1996). Another requirement is that all field experiences in India must take place only in government-funded (public) schools. Student teaching experiences in private schools are invalid for purposes of certification.

Field experiences offered by the colleges of education can be divided into two categories: formal and non-formal. Formal field experiences include experiences students have in formal settings such as high schools or on campus in the colleges of education, teaching their peers. These experiences occur at two phases (early field experiences and student teaching) in two different settings. Non-formal experiences refer to experiences students may have outside the settings of the institutions, for example, in the homes of learners. These occur throughout the course of the academic year outside of regular working hours and in settings such as villages adopted by the colleges of education of this purpose.

Methodology:

The sample for this study was drawn from teacher education institutions, both private and public, in a major city in India offering a one-academic year, post-baccalaureate program. Principals (or their assigned representatives) of five of the six institutions were interviewed personally for about 60 minutes each. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and translated when necessary. The transcripts were made available to the participants for their review and comments for member checks. Three independent raters coded and analyzed the transcripts. The training provided to raters included a description of the coding categories, a background of the educational system and the teacher education system in India. They were also provided with a glossary of terms related to teacher education in India.

Documents that were analyzed included the handbooks of the institutions, course syllabi and relevant official documents. Triangulation of data was effected by three different sources of information - government documents detailing teacher education requirements in India, documents from the schools/colleges of education, and the interviews with the principals or their assigned representatives. The final paper was also distributed to the participants before this presentation to afford them an opportunity for final comments and suggestions.

Findings

The findings in this study relate to the purpose, placements, and description of the logistics and activities required in early field experiences and in student teaching in formal settings only. The roles of the college faculty, who are the university supervisors, and the cooperating teachers are also analyzed. The terminology and grammar in the quotations have been amended or modified for clarity and ease of understanding.

Purpose

Early field experiences

The purpose of early field experiences is to get the students ready for teaching. It is to

prepare them for instructional experiences so that they know how to plan and deliver a lesson, "how they have to teach." Instructional methods are the important focus of this experience as exemplified by the amount of time spent on microteaching. The focus of the observations are also mainly on understanding the act and process of teaching. A list of questions provided to help students in this activity includes:

> What are the objectives of this prose lesson? What are the techniques or methods followed here? What was the students' participation like? Was there any improvement you can think of?

One participant defined another purposes of early field experiences, which is to understand the context of the classrooms and know the students, the environment and the responsibilities of the teacher in a school. S/he clearly stated,

> It will help them to know the classroom environment and classroom situation. They will observe how the classroom group is acting, how the students are behaving, how the teacher is behaving, and how they will have to behave when they go to classrooms.

Student teaching

The aim of student teaching appears to be implicit in the activities required in the experience. It was not explicitly stated by either the participants or in the documents analyzed. As with microteaching and early field experiences, the purpose seems to be to give the student teachers experience in planning a lesson and implementing it.

Placements

In all the institutions in the study, placement for both student teaching and early field experiences is the responsibility of designated faculty members. They plan the field experiences around the calendar of the schools, taking into consideration their examination periods when the classrooms are not available to the universities for field experiences, which could be for up to three months of the academic year, depending on the grade level in which placement is sought.

The faculty in charge of placements contact the principal or the centralized location in charge of schools either in person or by letter. Details of dates when students will be on site, the total number of placements required and the content area requirements are included in the letter. The principal receives this information and makes the placements, sometimes in consultation with her/his senior faculty. Decisions about placements rest with the schools and college faculty have no input nor, by and large, do they expect to be involved in this. They have little or no contact with teachers and have no means of identifying good mentors. One participant described the process as follows:

> We have a list of (public) schools, or we consult our students which school would be near their home or hostel. We have a consultation and then assign the schools to them. And the moment they go to the school, they meet the Headmaster (Principal). The Headmaster asks one of the senior teachers to assign classes for these (preservice teachers) according to their requirements. The school maintains an attendance register also, so that these preservice teachers can go and sign there and their attendance will be sent to us afterwards.

Three schools in the study have their own laboratory schools or schools attached to the college which are easily accessible and used primarily for observation in early field experiences. However, given the student strength, each institution needs about 15 schools to accommodate all the student teachers. So all the colleges use public schools for field experiences.

Two considerations the colleges have while making placements are the distance between the students' residence and the site and the accessibility of the school. Most students do not have private transport and rely on the public transport system. In a sprawling metropolis where the transport system is not conducive to comfortable traveling, the colleges need to ensure that the sites are both accessible by public transport and do not entail a lot of travel for each student.

Even if the students are placed in appropriate settings, the field experience may not be entirely successful. For instance, the schools may not be prepared to receive the students. The principal may not have communicated the program to the teachers who are taken by surprise. In such cases many teachers do not permit the students to observe them in their classrooms.

According to one participant,

> All the dates (for field experiences and student teaching) we plan and inform (the school). Even after that, there is a lapse. The letter will not reach the particular teacher (or) the Principal will say, 'Sign and send it,' and (she will) keep it in the office. The office will not give it to the respective teacher. So the teacher will be ignorant. So she will not plan anything .When our students go there she'll say, 'Oh, you've come. I haven't planned anything. Don't come to my class. Go to another class.' Many schools behave in a very indifferent way.

Sometimes the schools close unexpectedly or classes are not conducted due to other activities in the school. The students are then at a loss to complete their assignments or observe the teachers in a classroom atmosphere.

Student teaching

A factor that plays a large part in the timing of student teaching is the regulation that valid placements can be made only in public schools. This limits the sites in which students can have such experiences, engendering intense competition for placements. Public colleges of education apparently have a priority in their placements of student teachers in public schools. Further, at the end of the academic year in February/March, private colleges of education anticipate difficulty in placing their students when schools are busy with examinations and assessments. Rather than compete with public institutions for scarce resources, private colleges complete the student teaching experience earlier in the year.

Logistics and activities

Early field experiences

The term 'field experiences' applies to all non-theoretical coursework that focuses on observation and practicing teaching skills. Thus these experiences are broadly interpreted to include both laboratory experiences held on campus and off campus experiences. The focus of

early field experiences, which span three weeks, is on laboratory experiences, not on the experiences in the sites. Students are also afforded on-site experiences but these are limited in scope and indefinite in focus.

The two major activities students typically engage in are microteaching and observation. Of the five institutions in the study, in one institution students microteach for two weeks intensively while in three others they microteach for one week. The fifth institution allots three days for microteaching. Skills such as set induction, motivation, probing questions and use of examples are focused on. As one participant described it,

> We give them training in microteaching in the college itself for one week. They take six skills for one optional and six skills for a second optional. They take a particular concept and teach it to their peer group.

Students write multiple drafts of lesson plans before they teach. A model of planning-feedback-multiple drafts-teaching-feedback-reteaching is adopted so that students gain expertise in a set of skills and in writing lesson plans.

> We choose some skills relating to the subject and give them intensive practice for five days. On one day they practice one skill. They follow this system of tutors briefing and then the preservice teachers actually teach. There is analysis or feedback or review and then re-plan and re-teach. Everyone gets an opportunity to teach one lesson on each skill.

Students observe demonstration of teaching skills both on campus and in the schools. Three institutions invite experts from the classroom to demonstrate teaching skills. One institution supplements this with demonstration lessons by the faculty. Students observe these lessons and analyze them with a focus on methodology and "good teaching practices."

> Demonstration is done by the school teachers. ... We have demonstration lessons in two stages. In the first stage, the demonstration is given by our teacher educator on how to take classes ideally with all preparation, teaching aids and all that. Sometimes they even prepare video cassettes on the lesson for teaching. The second stage, the demonstration lessons are given by the (classroom) teachers themselves.

On-site experience is provided by three of the five institutions. Students are in the classroom for a week to 10 days in which observation is an important activity.

> The guide teachers are the people who handle classes. They may not have any lesson plans. They may not relish direct questions. So we ask the field experience students to be very careful and try to understand the implied motives and techniques demonstrated.

During this short period, students from one institution also teach lessons that have been approved by the faculty. Students also produce evidence of observations of the school atmosphere and the context of teaching. These include a diagram of the school premises, the placement of students in a classroom, and a sociogram.

In certain cases the students are deployed by the principal for purposes other than observation. If the school is short of teachers, the students are expected to step in and take charge of a class. As one faculty described it,

> Sometimes these (field experience students) are given teaching work when they go for observation. When so many teachers are on leave, the Headmaster is at a loss to manage the situation. Instead of allowing the students to observe, he may say, 'You can observe later. Why don't you go and meet these students?' Such things also sometimes happen. So, if somebody is on leave, field experience students are used for taking some classes. That doesn't allow them to observe the classes.

In such cases when students are unable to fulfill their activity, the institution is obliged to extend the field experience. Therefore students return to the schools later in the semester at their convenience and observation may become a matter of form rather than a meaningful activity.

Student teaching

With regard to the conduct and activities in student teaching, there is a marked difference between the expectations and practice of private institutions and public colleges of education. Student teaching in public colleges is scheduled for the end of the academic year in February/March while private colleges complete their sessions within the first three months of the

academic semester, usually in August/September.

Student teachers in public colleges spend three weeks student teaching while private colleges may require up to six weeks of student teaching. Public colleges keep the teaching requirement to a minimum as prescribed by regulations - 20 periods of 40 minutes each, 10 in each of their chosen areas. On the other hand, private colleges require between 21 and 40 periods.

Private colleges also encourage their student teachers to have different kinds of experiences. As one participant said, "For those six weeks they belong to the particular institutions (schools) and they have to do all the work like a regular teacher there." When students are not in class teaching, they are expected to assist the teachers or the principal when called upon to do so. Student teachers in private colleges may also be called upon to teach the lesson they have prepared to multiple sections of a class, thus increasing their contact with their pupils. The principal in the school is given to understand that once the students have completed their 'quota' of teaching classes, they are available for "any kind of work" deemed necessary. This may include teaching classes which is not in their content area or preparing teaching aids for the teachers in the school.

Assessment

Early field experiences

Assessment in early field experiences is formative. When the students microteach, the college faculty observe them and provide them feedback. No grades or marks are awarded in this experience.

Student teaching

Both formative and summative assessment are part of evaluation in student teaching. Formative assessment is provided by the university supervisors when the student teachers plan the lesson and when the university supervisors observe the student teacher. While writing lesson plans, the student teachers have to get them approved by the university supervisors and multiple

drafts are the norm. Feedback related to both content and methodology is immediate and timely.

Summative assessment in field experiences involves both 'internal evaluation' and 'external evaluation.' Student teaching is graded by both the college faculty and an external evaluation committee that is appointed for the purpose. Internal evaluation is done by the college faculty when the student teachers are on site. Of the three lessons that the college faculty observe, one lesson is assessed for 150 points without the college faculty giving students feedback on it. With two content areas that the student teacher chooses to specialize in as "optional subjects," the final grade for student teaching in the internal evaluation is based on 300 points.

External evaluation occurs at the end of the academic year and is not synchronized with student teaching. An external committee includes a school principal and two professors from other teacher education institutions. Committee members observe students teachers and examine student files related to field experiences. This committee may also conduct oral exams with selected candidates, about 10% of all students appearing for the examination. This sample usually includes high achievers as well as "borderline cases," those who have not performed well in the internal examination. The purpose is to test the evaluation levels and standards of the college faculty and the quality of the student teachers.

Role of university supervisors

Supervision of early field experiences and student teaching is an important function of college faculty. No other personnel such as adjuncts or graduate students are appointed to supervise teacher education students in their field experiences.

Early field experiences

College faculty take a major responsibility in the early field experiences. They act as administrators, models, 'critics' and supervisors in the field experiences. As administrators it is their responsibility to place students for their field experiences. They contact the principals, draft necessary letters and follow through with all the paperwork required.

They model good teaching in the demonstration lessons they undertake and lead discussions that analyze the demonstration lessons. As one participant put it, "If possible, we even conduct a demonstration, one or two demonstrations and discuss it with the preservice teachers."

They supervise the students in the microteaching activity. They "criticize" the lesson plans, correct them, make suggestions, observe the students when they teach, and give them feedback. The feedback is immediate and the students are expected to respond positively.

The colleges faculty do not actively supervise the students when they observe the cooperating teachers on site in the classrooms. In fact, the students do not have a supervisor on site all the time. Since the field experiences take place in about 15 schools and the college faculty are limited in number, it is not possible for the faculty to be available at each site during the whole experience. If the students have a problem such as teachers not in their room as scheduled, they have to find another to observe. The college faculty may not be at hand to arrange an alternative. This is compounded by the fact that most college faculty are not familiar with the sites or the teachers in the schools. The college faculty assess the students on the files they produce at the end of the experience. Discussion is not an integral part of the process.

Student teaching

The role of the college faculty in student teaching is intensive. One role the college faculty carry over from early field experiences is that of supervisor. Supervision is primarily subject-specific in that the college faculty supervise students in their content area only. They are responsible for preparing the student teacher to be ready to teach. In four of the five colleges in the study, they scrutinize all the lesson plans the student teachers prepare and offer suggestions. Student teachers may not commence their teaching practice without the specific approval of the college faculty. Faculty in the fifth institution approve multiple drafts of a lesson plan and concentrate on enabling the student teachers write a generic lesson plan.

In addition to the roles they played in early field experiences, the college faculty are also

evaluators in the student teaching phase of the experience ad they are the only evaluators in field experiences. As evaluators, they observe three lessons of the student teacher. Only these three observations are taken into consideration when the student teacher is evaluated. Since the student teachers have two content areas, they may expect six visits by two different professors. On two of these three they offer formative feedback. Summative evaluation is done on the third lesson the student teacher teaches.

The principal of one of the three private colleges in the study, who is not accounted for as faculty, also participates in the observation and formative evaluation of her/his students. S/he meets the cooperating teachers and the principal of each school and checks on the progress of the student teachers on site but s/he does not formally evaluate the student teachers.

Role of cooperating teacher

Early field experiences

Cooperating teachers in the early field experiences mainly play one role, that of model, and their interaction with the students is limited. They are observed by the field experience students either on campus where the may be invited to give a demonstration lesson or in their own classrooms. Demonstrations on campus are arranged when a school is attached to a college, as in a lab school. The teachers bring their students with them and conduct the class while the teacher education students observe from the back of the classroom.

Observation on site is a privilege granted to the field experience students who are "allowed" on site to observe the teacher but no further interaction takes place. According to the college faculty, teachers by and large seem reluctant to let the students into their classrooms especially if they have not had advance notice of the students' activity. In such cases, they may even refuse to have the students in the classrooms.

Even when the teachers are aware of the students and their requirements, the college faculty claim that they do not assist the students. As another participant said,

The teachers really do not take pains. They do not say 'The students are coming. We must

guide them, exhibit some nice things, show them how a teacher should behave or how a class is conducted.' The teachers do not take such interest in our students.

In neither situation are students encouraged to discuss their observations. The students do not share their findings with the cooperating teachers nor discuss their observations with them. The cooperating teachers in turn are not afforded an opportunity to conduct post-observation conferences or discussions, explaining their instructional techniques or lesson plans. The college faculty believe that if the observations are less than complimentary, the cooperating teachers may take exception to them. A participant observed regretfully,

> Normally, they don't talk about their demonstration to the teacher whom they've observed because teachers may not like all that. Some enthusiastic teachers or committed teachers would be happy to answer such questions, but that number is less these days.

However, not all teachers are unwilling to participate in field experiences. One participant conceded that not all cooperating teachers are uncooperative. Some "enthusiastic or committed teachers would be happy to answer questions" students put to them but "that number is less these days."

Student teaching

In the student teaching phase, cooperating teachers primarily play the role of host and incidentally the roles of observer and supervisor. As hosts, they permit the student teachers to teach in their classes, perhaps once a day and provide the topic for the student teachers. However, the responsibility for planning rests with the university supervisors and not with the cooperating teachers. If the cooperating teachers are satisfied with the performance of the student teacher, they may request her/him to teach other sessions using the same lesson plan.

Once the three mandatory lessons have been observed by the college faculty, the university would like the cooperating teacher to "go to the class, supervise the student teacher, criticize her, tell her what her drawbacks are, advise her how to correct herself." But the university does not insist on the cooperating teacher's presence in the classroom when the student teacher is teaching.

The cooperating teacher is expected to award grades but it is not taken into account for the final grade the student teachers receive as part of the field experience. In the opinion of the university faculty, the cooperating teachers are not very discriminatory in their evaluation. Their grades do not distinguish between levels of competence in student teachers. Therefore their grading is not given official recognition.

All the participants were unanimous in their disapproval of the interpretation cooperating teachers make of their role. The cooperating teachers were described as disinterested in their responsibility. Their attitude towards the student teachers, whom they considered "a burden" and "an intrusion," left a lot to be desired.

They did not observe the student teachers and in fact were hardly present in the classroom when the student teachers were teaching. This precluded any formative evaluation or active and meaningful supervision. As one participant complained, "Sitting in the staff room, how can they advise the student teacher?"

Another problem the university supervisors cited was that cooperating teachers were unfamiliar with many of the methods and aspects of teaching that the college faculty promoted. When student teachers went into the classroom prepared to use new and more effective methods, the cooperating teachers were ignorant of them and could not provide guidance to the student teachers. They were uninterested in learning from the student teachers or in teaching them what they knew.

The college does not prepare the cooperating teachers for the role of mentor and supervisor. There are no meetings to explain the field experience or the purpose of the student teaching experience or a workshop to acquaint the cooperating teachers with observation instruments or evaluation practices. Two colleges used to offer workshops and informational meetings but this practice was discontinued when little interest was shown by the cooperating teachers. One private college proposes to offer a workshop. While it may offer no incentives, it hopes that since the college has an excellent rapport with the schools, the teachers will be willing to attend the workshop.

The two public institutions in this study have a formal "Extension Services," the purpose of which is to provide professional development service to teachers in public schools. The topics of these conferences and workshops are mainly content- oriented and not concerned with supervision or their role as cooperating teachers.

Compensation

Cooperating teachers as a rule are not afforded any compensation. The principal of one private institution in the study visits each school site in turn and uses this opportunity to establish a firm connection with the school by token of appreciation. The gift is often meant to be used by the school rather than the cooperating teachers personally.

Discussions

There are more differences than similarities in field experiences between India and the U.S. Differences are apparent in the goals of field experiences, assessment models, and the roles of schools and cooperating teachers in field experiences. Similarities are to be found in placement practices and the relationship between the cooperating teachers and the university supervisors.

A significant factor contributing to these differences is the definition of 'field experiences' in each country. In India field experiences imply all activities that are related to teaching and planning even if they are on-campus activities. Thus microteaching is an important activity in field experiences. In the U.S. microteaching is identified as laboratory experience and is not described as a field experience. Therefore, the experiences of teacher education students in India and the U.S. differ widely, influencing the purpose and activities of field experiences and the roles supervisors play.

A major purpose of early field experiences in the U.S. is exploration of teaching as a career, and the activities include non-instructional tasks focusing on professional advancement and affirmation (McIntyre & Norris, 1980). In India, the career choice is taken for granted. The average time teacher education students in India are in schools (about four weeks) is minimal

compared to requirements in the U.S. Though student teachers may be encouraged to share the responsibilities of a teacher in a school, the experience is not structured or focused.

Student teachers in India have little opportunity to interact with students since their total contact time is about three days. The focus of 'field experiences' is on instructional activities such as planning and implementation which are observed, practiced and perfected during microteaching in laboratory settings on campus rather than in early field experiences occurring off-campus in classrooms. Further, the tangential involvement the preservice teachers have with the schools makes their plans content driven rather than learner oriented. When they plan a lesson, student teachers in India are not required to take into consideration aspects such as context of the school and student learning styles, which is contrary to expectations in teacher education programs in the U.S.

As in the U.S., summative evaluation of student teachers in India is performance oriented and is based on the teaching performance and artifacts of the student teacher. But the pattern of external evaluation in India has no parallel in the U.S. This model has many advantages. Firstly, student teachers are provided an impersonal, objective evaluation by a committee constituted for the specific purpose. Secondly, schools are represented in this activity since one of the external examiners is a school principal. Finally, this serves as an opportunity for professional development for teacher educators who in their role as external examiners evaluate the performance and achievements of other teacher education colleges. In the present atmosphere of accountability, this model prevalent in India could be given serious consideration by teacher education institutions in the U.S.

The nexus between colleges and schools has been recognized in the U.S. and the school - university partnership is becoming increasingly important (The Holmes Group, 1995). The contribution that schools can and do make to the successful education of preservice teachers is now accepted widely. In India, on the other hand, the relationship between schools and colleges of education is reminiscent of the situation 30 or 40 years ago in the U.S. in which teacher education is clearly the responsibility of the university. Schools are involved minimally and are

seen as 'outsiders' to the whole program. Programmatic decisions are made only by the university faulty and schools are not involved at any level. In fact, schools play a very passive role in the whole process, their only locus of control being the student teaching placements. Not surprisingly, the closeness afforded at PDS sites are unknown in India even when a laboratory school is attached to a college of education. Nor does it appear that the situation will change in the foreseeable future. The reform in teacher education initiated by the National Council for Teacher Education does not appear to consider a model of partnership significant to educating teachers (National Council for Teacher Education, 1997).

Another point of difference to be expected between the two teacher education contexts is the relation between the cooperating teacher and the student teacher. In the U.S. cooperating teachers are central to the student teaching experience, exerting greater influence on the student teachers than the university supervisors (Su, 1992). In India however, the university faculty appear to have more influence on the student teachers than the cooperating teachers. They are the ones who help the student teachers with the planning and implementation and are involved with the grading of the student teachers. The cooperating teachers are peripheral to the experience and are not likely to be in close enough contact with test teachers to influence them significantly.

In comparison to the differences between the teacher education patterns and contexts in India and the U.S., the similarities do not appear to be numerous or significant. Placement of field experience students and student teachers is unsatisfactory in both countries. Institutions working with professional development schools (PDSs) in the U.S. are more likely to have input into the teachers who mentor the students (The Holmes Group, 1995). But placement of student teachers in other models of teacher education programs in the U.S. is similar to that of India - colleges of education provide information about the number of placements required; schools make the placements; and university faculty have little input into that aspect of field experiences. There is little scope for identifying good mentors or matching them with student teachers.

The lack of communication between the cooperating teachers and the university supervisors appears to be widespread problem. It has long been a problem cited in the U.S.

(Guyton & McIntyre, 1990). While PDSs in the U.S. may provide for more opportunities for cooperating teachers to communicate with university supervisors, there is little empirical evidence to prove that such communication takes place and is effective. But cooperating teachers in India are not significantly involved in the supervision or evaluation of student teachers. This provides no opportunity for the cooperating teachers and preservice teachers in India to establish the close relationship that is observed in the U.S. When they are lax in performing their regular teaching activities, it may be unrealistic to expect them to take on other responsibilities with enthusiasm, especially when perhaps their own teacher education experiences were not inspiring or useful in their perspective (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 1986).

A final point of similarity is the professional development of cooperating teachers in India which has been attempted unsuccessfully for the same reasons as in the U.S. - lack of time and incentives for cooperating teachers (Ramanathan & Wilkins-Canter, in press). Efforts to make it a requirement at the district level have not met with success in either context (Ramanathan, 1996).

This study of field experiences in the U.S. and India has detailed the differences in practice and approaches between the two countries but it is clear that both contexts have ideas to offer each other. Significant practices and innovations in both countries must be compared and the conditions needed to transfer or transplant them need to be described. Further research must seek to clarify and identify forces that may influence such ventures. With so many different models of teacher education in both countries, research needs to compare them and detail the roles of various stakeholders in the process. With the internationalization of education, comparative studies are necessary for the improvement of the field.

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